

**BUILDING THE MERCHANT CITY:
SOME LESSONS IN URBAN REGENERATION**

Jack Brand

For the first sixty years of this century, Glasgow was a city on the way down.⁽¹⁾ By the 1970s, this was evident even in the city centre, with the west end of Sauchiehall Street: once a major centre of fashion: looking tatty and peppered with closed shops. Even worse was the historic centre running from the medieval High Street to Buchanan Street: the Merchant City.⁽²⁾

Since 1980 this central area has been returned to prosperity. This chapter will examine how this was done, not for the sake of the Glasgow story alone, but for the lessons we can learn for urban regeneration elsewhere.⁽³⁾ This is particularly appropriate now, when the Government has set up Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) to manage the regeneration of inner city areas in England and Wales.⁽⁴⁾ Parkinson points out that the philosophy of the UDCs is to remove the process of improvement from the local authorities, which are considered to be too political and inefficient, and to place it with an authority which has no local democratic responsibilities and is accountable only to the Government.⁽⁵⁾

In the rebuilding of the Merchant City, we shall show that Glasgow District Council was the essential first mover and the body which, even up to the present moment, has forced the pace of change. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that Glasgow has had a Labour-dominated council, with breaks totalling only eight years, since 1933.⁽⁶⁾ Even with this background, it has worked happily with developers and others in the private sector, and its cooperation with Scottish Development Agency (SDA) has brought outstanding results.

It is clear that several agencies cooperated in Glasgow as opposed to the strategy of concentrating decision making and implementation in an Urban Development Corporation. I shall argue that there were clear advantages in that the local authority was able to do things which the SDA, or a UDC, could not do. By the same token, the Agency worked as a catalyst in the relationship between the Council and the Developers under certain circumstances; not just by providing more money, but also by its attitudes and its record.

Finally, the events in Glasgow reveal something about the role of elected members in local government. It has been suggested that one

difference between British and US government, including local government, is that the elected members play little part in initiating and pursuing new developments. It will be shown that several Glasgow councillors made important contributions to the saving of the Merchant City.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE MERCHANT CITY

The area immediately to the west of the High Street has been settled as long as Glasgow has existed. Further to the West, the land was built upon as a result of the first wave of prosperity resulting from the tobacco trade in the eighteenth century. The mansions of the Tobacco Lords were the first buildings placed there.⁽⁷⁾ As the city grew even richer it expanded westwards in the nineteenth century and the residences were mostly replaced by commercial buildings. Thus, by the end of the century and until the 1960s, the area performed several functions and, towards the end of this period, these enterprises failed or went to other sites.

There are still some clothing manufacturers in the Merchant City, but their numbers have been drastically reduced since the 1950s by the cheaper prices of goods coming from the third world and by other competition. They depended on low rents and low profits and a (mainly female) labour force which was prepared to work for low wages and in bad conditions. The profits were undercut and the low rents were paid on ageing buildings which developed serious structural problems and were under constant threat of closure by the City's Department of Building Control and the Factory Inspectorate. Most of the 'rag trade' relocated or went out of business.

As in London's Covent Garden, the Fruit Market was originally near its retail outlets. For both areas the problems of space and streets too narrow to take the lorries and containerization later forced the users to look for a different site. In 1969, they moved to a greenfield site at Blochairn. Finally, the Merchant City was best known to ordinary Glaswegians because of a large number of retail warehouses such as Stirling Stevenson or Campbell, Stewart and Macdonald. In the 1970s, these businesses closed down as a result of competition from the chains and multiples which had opened in the City. They left huge buildings which did not have any obvious alternative use.

Two other problems exacerbated the situation. One was that, as long ago as 1965, Glasgow Corporation planned that the east flank of the ring road should come down the High Street: the eastern edge of the Merchant City: thus encouraging a broad band of planning blight there.⁽⁸⁾ Another was that one of the few institutions to locate near the area since the war, the University of Strathclyde, first intended to expand into the area and then decided to move instead towards Glasgow Cathedral and the north end of the High Street. In order to facilitate the first intention, the Corporation

had acquired a large amount of property for which it later had no use. It had also acquired property through Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) in order to prepare the way for the ring road. Along with other land and buildings obtained for different reasons, the City owned around sixty per cent of the vacant property within the boundaries of the area. There was great unease about this burden, but this was to be a crucial advantage in rebuilding the fortunes of the Merchant City.

REGENERATING GLASGOW, REGENERATING THE MERCHANT CITY

The regeneration of the Merchant City is part of a process which has affected much of the centre of Glasgow and beyond as far as the West End of Glasgow University and on the South Side. More than this, the people who now live in the smart flats, eat in the new restaurants, and shop in the boutiques have surplus cash which did not seem to be there ten years ago. The Merchant City and many other prosperous parts of Glasgow exist because certain sorts of Glaswegians now have more money and this, in part, is because the social arrangements have changed. When Glasgow's Director of Planning, James Rae, looked at the demographic trends in 1974, he found that Glasgow, in common with other European cities, was affected by new patterns of family formation.⁽⁹⁾ There are now many more single person households and many more couples with no children. These are precisely the categories whose members find it attractive to live in the Merchant City. Thus the very structure of Glasgow's population now encourages the development of this sort of area. Without family obligations, they have more disposable income and can afford to buy flats where before they would have been more inclined to rent in the public sector, both in order to afford a family and to be near their own parents and relatives. Rae and the Labour councillors agreed that it was important to accommodate these groups in the city. There was a fear that these young prosperous groups would otherwise leave the City for suburbs like Bearsden and Newton Mearns, depriving the city of talent and of rate income. The only way of ensuring this end was to see that housing was provided for owner occupation.

In order to achieve this end, the old suspicion between the Labour councillors and developers had to be allayed. It is ironic that a natural event seems to have elicited a new attitude to rehabilitation and to private developers. In 1968 a storm caused enormous damage to the buildings of Glasgow. In many cases whole roofs were ripped off and other damage was done which, at the end of the day, caused millions of pounds worth of damage. The damage was particularly serious because many of the properties were tenements between eighty and one hundred years old. For our purposes, the importance of this event was that the local authority was forced to work with private builders on an unprecedented scale to make the houses habitable.

Soon after the storm there took place a country-wide change in attitudes to planning. Everywhere the solution of redevelopment, of tearing down the old buildings and starting again, was abandoned and planners tried to conserve and rehabilitate older buildings which had architectural merit or which provided the homes for an existing community.⁽¹⁰⁾ Central government money became available to rehabilitate existing tenements and other houses irrespective of storm damage and, in many parts of the city, buildings were reroofed, stonework was cleaned and other work was done.

A third venture which brought Glasgow District Council and the developers and the SDA together was the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal project (GEAR) which started in 1976. This government funded programme was led by the SDA and it included an enormous amount of tenemental improvement and general environmental upgrading in a part of Glasgow which had suffered very badly. From the beginning the emphasis was on help for owner occupiers of the tenement flats and, if possible, on economic regeneration. The success of GEAR proved that an area could be targeted and improved by several agencies working together.

There was also an associated change in planning practice which discouraged the use of greenfield sites for housing and other purposes and emphasized the use of areas nearer existing city centres. Thus in 1981, Strathclyde Regional Council's Structure Plan laid down that no more land outside existing built-up areas would be made available for housing, but that housing authorities should develop instead in derelict and other brownfield sites. The City of Glasgow strongly supported this policy. The thrust of planning since the end of the war had been to decant the overcrowded inner city areas to large peripheral housing estates like Drumchapel or Pollock. Most of the serious overcrowding had now been dealt with. It was decided, among other projects, to use derelict inner city areas.

It was under those circumstances that the Conservative government began to exert pressure on local authorities to pay more attention to private housing and to sell off council property. As an old-established Labour local authority, Glasgow District Council was initially opposed to the sale of any of its property, but several of its leaders convinced the Group that this should be done in the late 1970s. Tenants Rights etc (Scotland) Act encouraged this. These pressures formed a background to the development of the Merchant City.

Even without the external events the politics of Glasgow were changing. In 1975, the City of Glasgow District Council replaced the old Glasgow Corporation as a result of local government reorganization.⁽¹¹⁾ One effect of this was that a new group of Labour councillors were elected who did not share all the attitudes of their older colleagues. In a Labour

authority which had always been pragmatic, they were even more open to new ways of doing things. One sign of the times was that the authority began experimenting with the provision of housing by community-based housing associations which quickly became successful. It was a clear demonstration that the new Labour councillors were willing to depart from the old model of monolithic support for council housing and the (mostly) new councillors who supported this new type of housing also supported the experiment of selling some of the Council's housing stock.

Soon, the old Labour certainties were again shaken. In 1977, the party lost its absolute control of the council, as a result of Scottish National Party (SNP) successes at the May elections. For tactical reasons, they refused to take over the Convenorships and the minority Conservatives then pursued policies which were not officially approved by Labour, such as the sale of council houses, the encouragement of owner-occupation in the City, and the sale of land to private developers. Unofficially, however, many of the younger Labour councillors believed that this was the way to go. When Labour returned to power in the City in 1980 they maintained these policies. In their election manifesto of that year they proposed an 'Alternative Strategy' which was largely the work of the major officials of the council, but was accepted by the new leaders of the Labour Group. It proposed among other things that land which was surplus to public requirement should be offered first to the community-based housing associations and what was not disposed of in this way was to be sold to private developers. Thus certain necessary decisions had been taken by the elected members long before the Merchant City was brought to life.

In the years immediately before and after Labour's loss of power, the District Council produced a series of 'Yellow Housing Sites Books' which identified sites throughout the City which were available for redevelopment. In no case was there much interest from developers. In the Merchant City the problem was particularly serious, not only because of the amount of derelict property, but also because, as we have seen, so many vacant sites and empty buildings there belonged to the District Council itself. Thus the problem of the Merchant City was an acute form of a difficulty which affected the whole of the City. By the end of the 70s the senior officers of the authority and the most influential councillors of all parties were convinced that new housing had to be built in the inner areas of Glasgow and that, given the changing demography of the City, this should be housing for owner occupation. The trick was to make this commitment by the City authorities into a real programme and, to do this, they needed to persuade the developers.

GLASGOW BUILDS THE MERCHANT CITY

Glasgow District Council was the principle (if not the on lie) begetter of the new Merchant City. Up to this point, I have outlined the events and

processes which formed the background and the local authority had little or no control over many of them. In what follows, it will be shown that other organizations, principally the private developers and the SDA, made essential contributions, but it was the District Council which took the first steps and which kept the process going.

This point is important and we should pause to study its significance in terms of the administration of inner city development elsewhere. The method which was devised for England and Wales was the UDCs with the best-known examples of their work in London Docklands and Liverpool.⁽¹²⁾ There are significant differences in their organization and methods of working. UDCs were invented as bodies which would 'get things done' and dispense with the 'time-wasting' procedures of local government. They had the one task of imposing development in the area and their target was the private developer. It is significant that the first three chairmen of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) were themselves developers. The local authorities were excluded and the Corporations were responsible to no-one other than the Government. This led to private meetings and decision-taking and a great deal of friction between them and the local community including the local authorities.⁽¹³⁾

Glasgow chose a more traditional method of development. Since the process was controlled by the local authority, there was less of a problem of friction or of a loss of local accountability. The fact that the areas had their own councillors was a guarantee of this. On the other hand, there might have been a problem because Glasgow District Council did not have the powers to deal with certain aspect of the issue. We shall find that some phases in the development of the Merchant City required funding of a type which the District Council could not give. It was at these points that they found ways of using money which was not originally meant for these purposes or they were able to call on the SDA. One important difference between the SDA and the English UDCs was that the SDA never tried to impose a solution on unwilling councils, but, as in GEAR, worked along with Glasgow District Council and the Strathclyde Regional Council.

There are two other differences between the UDCs and the process in Glasgow. The UDCs have a more-or-less fixed *modus operandi* whereby they assemble land and then make it available for private developers.⁽¹⁴⁾ They do not normally take any part in the development themselves. The Labour-controlled Glasgow District Council was, interestingly, more incremental in its approach and its opportunistic style seems to have maximized the possibilities of using and improving the existing buildings and cityscape. It proceeded by using a series of devices and agreements which seemed appropriate to the particular part of the Merchant City which had to be developed and to the opportunities which appeared. In some cases this involved making the land available to the developers, but at other

times they took a more active stance. The Council did not pursue a Grand Strategy with every step laid down in advance. Glasgow's way was to set an aim of bringing the Merchant City and other city centre areas alive and then, when opportunities arose, made this more precise by deciding to making the area residential. Having set this aim, it allowed events and opportunities to guide it towards the precise form that the Merchant City would take.

The second feature, which was not always repeated even within Glasgow, was that, as we have already seen, the District Council owned a large proportion of the vacant buildings and sites and thus was able to dispose of them.⁽¹⁵⁾

The way forward was thus not guided by a master plan. It depended on a series of opportunities. In 1981, the new Conservative Government changed the rules for grant aiding rehabilitation and improvement of tenemental property in the Housing (Scotland) Act. First, up to a ninety per cent grant could be made and there was no requirement that it had to be repaid if the owner occupier left within five years. This meant that a grant could be made for housing to a developer who would then sell it on to a private owner. Secondly, the money for these grants was to come from the Non-Housing Revenue Account, that is to say from monies other than those intended for council housing, and there was no ceiling on the total amount to be spent. Thus even traditional Labour councillors could be happy to spend the money, since it did not take anything from Council tenants. The Merchant City, in addition, had a special status because there was virtually no housing in the area and regeneration would not displace any of the poorer tenants. Given this new situation, council leaders and officials cooperated to devise a way of attracting developers and especially to attracting them into the area.

A list of the sites which were available in the Merchant City was extracted from the Yellow Books and a campaign to attract developers was launched with the pamphlet *Development Opportunities in the Merchant City*. The strategy for marketing the sites was developed at a series of meetings of the Housing Sites Working Group which reported to the Central Area Management Team and which considered the problems of developing sites in the whole of the City. At the level of the Elected Members the relevant committees were the Housing Core Group and the Private Sector Working Party. The first of these bodies consisted of the convenors of the major sub-committees of Housing and its task was to look at all new ideas in principle and also to clear them with the Leaders of the other parties on the Council. As such, it was the organization which did the groundwork at the political level for the development of the Merchant City and took the major decisions. The Private Sector Working Party was one of the three main sub-committees, but it was not arranged on conventional lines. In the first place it contained senior officers and councillors of the

Regional Council as well as those from Glasgow District Council and, in addition to them, representatives of the volume builders like Barratt and Wimpey. The idea behind this composition was that, if private housing was to be encouraged in the City, both levels of local authority would have to work together in coordinating the services and it would also be important to get to know the approach of the developers and to cooperate with them. Setting up a committee of this type was a clear political commitment by the elected members and it was important in convincing the developers eventually that they could work in Glasgow in general and in the Merchant City in particular.

In 1980 John Kernaghan became Convenor of the Housing Committee. This was a crucial appointment because Kernaghan was well aware of how other city centres had been developed and how housing had been brought back into the inner city. He was happy to work with developers to revive the Merchant City, but at the same time he was able to retain the support of the rank and file of Labour councillors who were, many of them, unhappy about working with private enterprise. He had been brought up in Drumchapel, one of the peripheral council housing estates and, although he was young and a university graduate, there was a feeling that he was 'one of us'. Other councillors such as the Leader Jean McFadden or the convenor of the Private Housing Working Party, John Ross, were also strong supporters of the plan, but Kernaghan's personality and contacts were crucial. Without him, the deals and arrangements which were made by the officials simply would not have been countenanced by the Labour Group and there would have been no Merchant City.

Central to the dealing and the future of the area was the possibility of giving grants to developers, up to £5,100 per unit, for housing. This tempted in the developers and ensured that the development was housing led. The Scottish Office had actually intended the new financial arrangements for the improvement of tenements, but the close working together of councillors and certain senior officers in the Housing Core Group led to the decision that it could be used to convert buildings which were not presently used for housing and thus could be applied to the restoration of the Merchant City. The fact that there was no cash ceiling on the amount of money which could be spent for rehabilitation meant that the councillors, led by Kernaghan and Ross, took the decision that they should 'go for broke' and spend as much on rehabilitation as they possibly could both in the Merchant City and elsewhere. This sort of decision could only have been taken by the elected members and the scale on which it was pursued was immense. Up to 1981, Glasgow had spent only about £20 million each year on rehabilitation. As a result of the decision to make the maximum use of the new grant arrangements, £70 million was spent in 1982 and £80 million in 1983. Only about one million in each year was spent on the Merchant City, but the availability of the money and the amount of rehabilitation city-wide made the idea of working with the sort of buildings

that were in the Merchant City more acceptable to the developers.

The Labour Group was not alone in the Labour movement in its support for private housing development in the Merchant City. There and in other such schemes in the City, it had the enthusiastic support of UCATT and the other building unions. For much of the 70s workers in those trades had had little employment. As well as providing housing which would keep young affluent Glaswegians in Glasgow, the councillors wanted to provide work and, with the union involvement, this was a political aim as well as a social one.

Finally, in considering the contribution of the elected members to the development, the decision to vary planning standards in order to get rehabilitation started was legitimized there. A number of criteria were affected, but perhaps the most important were the idea of the dual aspect flat and the principle that for each housing unit there should be two parking spaces. With the sorts of buildings which were available, it was often not easy to provide each flat with windows on at least two of its sides. The decision to vary this requirement could only be taken by the councillors. Once the idea of inner-city housing became acceptable, the planners were able gradually to reinstate the requirement. The standard of parking was more difficult to modify because it was implemented by the Roads Department of the Regional Council. The fact that both local authorities were under Labour control meant, however, that it was relatively easy to relax the standard, again for the early stages and it too has been reimposed with the support of all parties in the local authorities.

In summary, then, the elected members played an important role and were by no means puppets controlled by the senior officials. Both officials and elected members worked together as a team and it is the relation between senior councillors and senior officials which is a striking feature of the process.

If we turn now to the implementation of these policies, we come immediately on an example of the close relation between the councillors and senior officers. It was Ronnie Macdonald, one of the Depute Directors of the Housing Department, who worked out a method of applying the money intended by the Government for the rehabilitation of tenements into the work of conversion of commercial buildings for housing in the Merchant City. On the basis that the accounts of the developers would be open, a condition demanded by the elected members, each project was evaluated by examining the gap between the capital which the developers were able to put into the development on the one hand and the profit they wanted to make from the process on the other. Normally this was set at twenty per cent since the developer would expect to pay around fourteen per cent for any loans he might have. Among other devices which were used to close the gap was the practice of selling the land or buildings to the

developers at low prices and, in some cases, for nothing at all. In the later stages, other sorts of grants and loans were used to close the gap when the SDA became active in the Merchant City. Macdonald and his colleagues also persuaded the Scottish Development Department to raise the ceiling on the grant per unit when this seemed necessary to secure the development and even to grant-aid non-housing developments such as small shops where it seemed that this was necessary to avoid an empty property at ground floor level.

The first to test water was Windex which converted the Albion Buildings, previously a warehouse with a bank on its ground floor and the upstairs empty for several years, into twenty-three flats. Some of these units were sold off the drawing board before they had even been built.

Although the basis of the Glasgow District Council's success in developing the Merchant City was its ownership of much of the property, it soon reached the situation where further development needed more than the efforts of the Council. The first buildings lent themselves to being developed on their own. They stood apart from other buildings and, with some imagination, they could be converted into housing. The very construction of an old part of any city often means, however, that buildings may be part of a large block which has to be treated as a whole. In the Merchant City, apart from this, there were also the huge retail warehouses, in some cases up to one hundred feet deep, which could not readily be converted into residences. In many cases they were listed buildings and their facades at least had to be retained, but, behind the facades, the whole configuration of the building had to be changed. Instead of treating the Merchant City as a series of one-off developments of individual more or less free-standing buildings, the Council now had to tackle large warehouses on several floors which had previously consisted of different departments and covered virtually a whole city block. This was even more complex where they were part of a whole block, or even more, of buildings which had been in different ownership and use, but which were now in various stages of delapidation. Many of the buildings of the Merchant City were of this type. It was to deal with such a situation that the SDA was brought into the team.

The most obvious reason was that the Glasgow District Council's grants could only be given for housing and, for development on this scale, there often had to be a non-housing element. In 1984 the Government withdrew the housing improvement allocation and the Council had to look to the Agency even for the conversion of buildings into flats. Thus the SDA's Local Enterprise Grants for Urban Projects (LEGUP) money was used on a large building in Blackfriars Street, the first in which the Agency was involved, even though it was virtually exclusively converted to housing. The role of the SDA soon became more complex and essential. It became essential in some of the buildings being rehabilitated now where there is no housing. The Fashion Centre in the old Sherrif Court House could not

benefit from the Council's housing grant, and funding had to come from the agency or from other financial sources. In the renovation of the large buildings or entire blocks, complicated financial packages had to be put together including grants of several types and loans and for this the SDA was certainly required. The Agency was also essential at this stage because it was known to Scottish business in general as a partner in funding development of all kinds. Private firms, which might have felt less enthusiastic about working with a Labour Council that had not been welcoming towards them in the past, were accustomed to and happy with the Agency. One of the fruits of this was that the later and more complex developments led to a formalized working together of the two public bodies with the developers. The first example of this was in the Ingram Square development where a public company, Yarmadillo, was set up to control the relationship and to ensure that not only the private developer, but also the Council and the Agency, all working as developers, would split the profits evenly. Similarly, Glasgow District Council and a developer called Classical House are in partnership for the development of the Italian Centre.

CONCLUSION

This essay on the process of city centre development has examined the ways in which a local authority coordinated the development of a city centre. This is a difficult process and the Government has, by the creation of UDCs, implied that it was not a task for ordinary councils. Glasgow's experience suggests that a council can be successful. In the next few paragraphs I shall argue that this can be a model for other local authorities.

One of the first points to be noticed is that local government in Glasgow has changed the face of the city on numerous previous occasions. It was the City Corporation which oversaw the movement West in the 1870s and, much more recently, it also made the crucial decisions to construct the large peripheral working class estates immediately after the War and to build the huge high-rise blocks on both sides of the Clyde in the late 60s and 70s. It is irrelevant that many of these decisions were controversial and some have since been reversed. Any agency, whether of central or local government or in the private sphere, operates in terms of the values of that time and with the characteristic view of the important social needs. Much more important is that Glasgow Corporation and later the District Council were able to make these large decisions and to implement them.

It is interesting to see how these decisions were made. There is an assumption in much of the work on British local government that councillors play a limited policy-making role.⁽¹⁶⁾ In Glasgow, by contrast, I have already pointed out that John Kernaghan was a central figure in making the decisions to develop the Merchant City. More indirectly, Jean McFadden and John Ross were also essential. In each of these cases the

process was not that the elected leaders simply supported the proposals of the officers, but that they themselves became convinced of the necessity of the course of action and they then convinced their colleagues who were not automatically of the same mind. They thus changed the direction of Council policy in this sphere. The fact that they were elected meant that this was done with the legitimacy of democracy and it was not imposed on an unwilling Council or City. Moreover, where each chief officer might see the problem from the point of view of housing or planning or estates, the councillors' leaders were forced to take an all-round view because they had to argue and work with their colleagues who would have different interests. This association of a convenor or a leader of the council with a project or a development of policy is a regular feature of Glasgow politics. In the 60s Councillor William L Taylor was the person most associated with the building of the high flats and at the same time and a little later in the 70s, Councillor Tom Fulton was largely responsible for an ambitious roads programme. It is tempting to compare this with the 'ribbon-cutting' local government leaders in the United States.⁽¹⁷⁾ Glasgow councillors have never taken as high a profile as their American counterparts in the development of projects, but their work has arguably been just as important.

The Convenors were not the main fount of policy. Senior officers dealt with the problems every day and it was from them that the ideas came in most instances. The heads of the departments of Planning, Housing and Estates planned the moves to deal with the development of the Merchant City and we should notice that they worked on a corporate basis. Later their senior assistants such as Ronnie Macdonald, Gwyn Kennedy and Ron McChristie also worked corporately to shape the ways in which the development took place. One cannot account for the revival except by understanding that these senior officers worked together, not without problems, but still with a single goal in mind, and also cooperated with the senior elected members to see that solutions were found to the problems which continually cropped up.

Although the District Council's initiating role was crucial, they could not have gone far without the SDA. Would it have been better for the SDA to take over the whole scheme?

The most obvious advantage of the existing cooperative process as compared with one which worked more or less along the lines of the UDCs is that friction between the two bodies was minimized. The SDA did not take over from the Council, it was invited in. They complemented each other in the sorts of relations they had to the developments and to the developers. This compares favourably with the arguments and obstructions which characterized the relationship between, for example, the LDDC and boroughs like Tower Hamlets.

The ways in which the SDA worked was also different from that of the UDCs. The latter are more prominently oriented towards profitability and the encouragement of the private sector. The UDCs are present only in areas of severe dereliction and their brief is to return the land to productive use. It is then for the private sector to develop the projects. By contrast, the SDA has the wider aim of reviving the Scottish economy in a general sense and the general improvement of any area in which one of its projects is sited. Where UDCs exist for the economic rehabilitation of their areas, the SDA retains a concern for general welfare even though the projects which it funds have to be judged in terms of their financial viability. Perhaps this was best illustrated by a series of actions which took place during the development of Ingram Square. In order to create housing and other units there it was necessary to remove a firm which made sports goods. Instead of simply intimating to them that their lease was up and that they were now required to move, as a UDC would have done, the SDA helped the firm relocate in another building only a few hundred yards away. What was important to the Council and the Agency was that jobs should be retained in the area and not simply that profit was their only guideline. It is interesting to compare this with the attitude of the LDDC. The National Audit Office report mentions a dispute between the Corporation and one of the two Docklands' Education Authorities in which the LDDC had compulsorily purchased some land and then refused to sell it for a school at any price lower than the market price. It could not do so because the Department of the Environment and Treasury approval were required for such a course of action.⁽¹⁸⁾ Thus the LDDC had one aim which was the maximization of profit, while both Glasgow District Council and the SDA were prepared to look more broadly at the needs of the area in question even to the extent of virtually giving away land in order to get development moving and, in the last Glasgow example, preserving existing jobs at some effort of time and money. There are other examples of the single-minded attitude of the London Corporation in the National Audit Office's report. It notes that both the Docklands Local Education Authority had objected to the LDDC's proposals to buy land for a road scheme which would leave a primary school and an adult education institute as traffic islands in the midst of continuous streams of traffic. At the time of publication of this report, the dispute had not been resolved.⁽¹⁹⁾ It seemed to be representative of a general situation, noted in the report, where the Comptroller and Auditor General draws attention to the fact that community groups and the local authorities felt that the Corporation did not consult them enough while the Corporation protested that it did.⁽²⁰⁾ There are no similar complaints in the case of the Merchant City and it seems clear that this is largely due to the involvement of the local authority and the good relations which were thus built up with the SDA.

We cannot here comment on the quality of the urban environment produced by the method in Glasgow as compared with that in the UDC

areas. In terms of the quality of the democratic process, the Scottish example is the clear winner.

Jack Brand, Department of Politics, Strathclyde University.

References

1. see S Checkland, *The UPAS Tree: Glasgow 1975-1975*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow Press, 1976.
2. The term seems to have been in general use for a long time. The first reference in writing that I have been able to find is in A Gomme and D Walker *The Architecture of Glasgow*, London, Lund Humphries, 1968. Lord Esher's report *Conservation in Glasgow* Corporation of Glasgow 1971 also mentions it in para 28.
3. I have been helped in writing this article by a great many people; local government officials, elected members and others. I cannot mention them all, but I must single out Mr Jim Patrick of the City of Glasgow Planning Department to whom I spoke on many occasions and who never ceased to be interesting and helpful. I take complete responsibility for the views expressed and for the accuracy of the article.
4. These were set up under the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980. Two were established in 1981: the London Docklands and the Merseyside Development Corporations. These were followed in 1987 by corporations in the Black Country, Teeside Tyne and Wear, Trafford Park, Cardiff, Bristol, Leeds and Central Manchester and in 1988 by one in Sheffield. They have plans to reclaim and assemble land for development and to use grant aid from the Department of the Environment to encourage private investment.
5. see M Parkinson *Urban Generation and Development Corporations* Local Economy 3 (2) August 1988 pp 109-118.
6. Labour did not form the administration in Glasgow during the years 1948-51, 1968-71 and 1977-79.
7. see Tom Devine *The Tobacco Lords* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1976.
8. *Greater Glasgow Transportation Study*, Glasgow Corporation, 1965.
9. *People and Housing in Glasgow 1887-1999* Glasgow Corporation 1974. The point has been mentioned in subsequent revisions of the Structure Plan for the Region.
10. see, for example, J B Cullingworth *Town and Country Planning in Britain* (10th edition) London, Allen and Unwin, 1988.
11. Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
12. For a review of the record of the Corporations in London Docklands and on Merseyside, see National Audit Office *Department of the Environment: Urban Development Corporations* London, HMSO, 18 May 1988.
13. National Audit Office 1988 para 2.29.
14. see *Weekend Guardian* 8-9 April 1989 pp 1-5.
15. It did, however, occur in the Maryhill Corridor, Kent Road and Govan.
16. see, for example, Anthony Birch's *Small Town Politics*, Oxford OUP 1959 or Ken Newton *Second City Politics* Oxford OUP 1976.
17. I am indebted to Robin Boyle of the Centre for Planning, University of Strathclyde, for this point.
18. National Audit Office, 1988 para 2.27.
19. *ibid* para 2.31.
20. *ibid* para 2.27.